

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Overcoming Prejudice

Someone recently suggested in this column that it would be nice to hear from a Caucasian with regard to his or her overcoming racial prejudice (March 7 “Mailbox”). In response to that suggestion, I offer the following.

For many years I harbored ill feelings toward the Oriental race. Here I was practicing Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism and trying to justify these feelings. I resented the fact that so many members of SGI were “foreigners.”

But this practice allows no one to escape the truth, and before long I realized the error of my thinking. I began to chant about this wrongful attitude. I then proceeded to go out of my way to develop friendships with the people I so disliked. I forced myself to open my heart, mind and life before them. I bared my soul so to speak, shared my thoughts and feelings on every level.

To my amazement this was met with tremendous acceptance and trust. The dialogue we shared was so healing. I discovered to my surprise and delight that I had made some of my best friends ever both inside and outside of SGI. My feeling now is gratitude for these wonderful women. Their friendship, acceptance and sharing of their culture has been so beneficial to me. I am so happy to see the Japanese members at meetings and cannot thank them enough for sharing this practice with all of us. Most of all I am grateful for SGI President Ikeda, Nichiren Daishonin and the Gohonzon. I thank them for not letting me miss this opportunity for growth.

— JENNIFER CECERE, Port Orchard, Wash.

### Everyone’s Experience Is Valuable

I am writing in response to Robin Beck’s letter (March 21 “Mailbox”). Although I agree that painting members’ experiences who have happy marriages and family lives would be of value, I disagree with his belief that abuse occurs primarily in the unmarried population. I’m not an expert in statistics, but I do know that physical and emotional abuse encompasses an alarmingly large number of both married and unmarried couples. Abuse knows no boundaries, be they social status, educational background or ethnic origin. It stems from a deep lack of respect for oneself and others, and for the very dignity of human life.

I speak from experience. I was involved with an abusive husband for 19 years. I practiced sincerely throughout this time, and my husband practiced as well. After years of professional counseling and guidance from my SGI senior leaders, I realized that I had to take control of my own life. My decision to divorce was not an easy one.

With my faith in the Gohonzon, I have begun a shining new chapter in my life. It has taken time to heal, to develop trust and to love again. My faith has seen me through it all.

So, to Robin Beck, I say that as long as we practice earnestly and sincerely, we are all success stories. We should be slow to judge, and we should keep our minds and hearts open to others in regards to their circumstances. We each have our own story to tell and can in turn encourage others that may be experiencing what we have gone through before them.

— ROBIN RACOMA, Pearl City, Hawaii

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